

**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 9 NOVEMBER**

**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE
REPORT 2020/21**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Environment and Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an annual performance update on the key performance indicators that the Council is responsible for delivering against the Council's Strategic Plan. Many of the performance Indicators included in this report are reported by the Environment Branch of the Environment & Transport Department and several are published by government.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The updates in this report reflect progress against the Council's Strategic Outcomes Framework within the Strategic Plan to 2022, and the Environment performance framework and related high-level plans and strategies.

Background

3. Following the decision to separate the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the full Council in July 2021 this is the first annual report to the Committee covering solely Environment and Waste performance. This report highlights how a variety of indicators are performing against the Council's key outcomes: Strong Economy, Wellbeing and Opportunity, Keeping People Safe, Great Communities, Affordable and Quality Homes and supporting corporate enablers and includes highlights for the year.
4. This report includes Appendix A, containing a performance dashboard that forms part of the Council's Annual Report 2020/21 Performance Compendium. The performance dashboards include several indicators for which the Council does not have direct control of delivery, such as for air quality, river quality and biodiversity. These indicators have been included to provide a broader picture of the local environment and comprise a mix of national and locally developed metrics. Reviewing these may highlight areas for scrutiny of delivery by other agencies or the need for lobbying to influence government policy and funding. It is expected that action by a range of agencies will improve a number of these metrics over time.
5. The Council's performance is benchmarked against 33 authorities which cover large, principally non-urban, geographical areas. Where it is available, the dashboards

indicate which quartile Leicestershire's performance falls into. The 1st quartile is defined as performance that falls within the top 25% of county areas (the best). The 4th quartile is defined as performance that falls within the bottom 25% of county areas (the worst). The comparison quartiles are updated annually in November.

6. Improvement or deterioration in performance is indicated by the 'direction of travel' arrows on the performance dashboard. For example, if tonnes of carbon emissions from LCC buildings reduces, the direction of travel arrow will point upwards representing an improvement in performance.
7. Appendix B contains a draft of the Environment and Climate Change highlights and once finalised it will be included in the Council's Annual Delivery Report, which will go forward to Cabinet and Council in due course.

Performance Update – Annual Report 2020/21

8. The Annual Report dashboard shows performance for Environment and Climate Change performance up to March 2021. Overall, there are 25 performance indicators included in this report which are aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan Outcomes. The dashboards in Appendix A show: the indicator description, the quartile position, the direction of travel of performance, end of year data, target/standard; the previous end of year data; polarity (whether a high or low number is good performance) and commentary.
9. Where a direction of travel is available: 18 show improvements, 4 had declined and 1 remained similar to the previous year.
10. Where comparative data is available, with the exception of 'CO2 emissions per capita,' performance is below the average (quartiles 3 or 4) when compared to other English county areas.

Environment and Waste

Waste Management (Great Communities & Corporate Enablers)

11. The following waste performance indicators support the Council's 'Great Communities' outcome except for the two internal waste indicators which cover waste produced by the County Council and support the 'Corporate Enablers' outcome.
12. 'The total household waste per household' declined slightly from 1031kg in 2019/20 to 1020kg in 2020/21 resulting in a slight improvement in performance. In comparison to other county councils Leicestershire's performance was below average (in the third quartile in 2019/20).
13. The 'tonnes of waste produced from LCC sites (non-operational)' has significantly improved in performance this year as waste decreased by 63% from 358 tonnes (2019/20) to 133 tonnes (2020/21) and has met its interim target of fewer than 410 tonnes. This is largely due to most office-based staff working at home during the pandemic period. This indicator has shown a long-term improvement (i.e. reduction in waste) since 2012-13.

14. The percentage of municipal local authority collected waste sent to landfill has significantly reduced from 32.2% in 2019/20 to 27.8% in 2020/21 resulting in an improvement in performance which has met its 30% target. This is due to the authority having negotiated an increase in the amount of waste delivered to alternative disposal points which diverts waste that would have been landfilled into alternative treatment. This is expected to help reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill in future years. Leicestershire is in the fourth quartile for this indicator compared to other English county councils for 2019/20. The next quartile update is expected to reflect the improvement in performance for 2020/21.
15. The 'Percentage of Waste recycled from LCC sites (non-operational)' declined in performance by 13 percentage points since the previous update from 61% in 2019/20 to 48% in 2020/21 and missed its target of 62.3%. Many buildings and Council services operated at a reduced staff capacity in quarter 4 due to the third national lockdown, which meant that less dry recycling was captured in council buildings. An important outcome here is that there has been a significant reduction in waste overall and consequently there is less recyclable waste being produced / captured which is resulting in a lower recycling performance figure. There is less paper due to reduced printing and no composting waste, both of which would have previously bolstered the recycling figure.
16. The 'percentage of household waste sent by local authorities across Leicestershire for reuse, recycling or composting' declined from 46% in 2019/20 to 43% in 2020/21 and has missed its statutory 50% target. Compared to other county councils Leicestershire is below average (in the third quartile 2019/20). During 2020/21, Covid-19 meant some waste services across the County were temporarily disrupted or suspended, significantly impacting the service. During the year, the Council continued to support residents in reducing their waste through the SHIRE environment grants. These have supported projects to minimise household waste and reuse in order to reduce the amount of waste thrown away. The Council offered a range of educational activities (many online in 2020) to promote waste reduction, recycling and reuse. (See the Waste Management section of Appendix B for further highlights).
17. The 'percentage of staff who say LCC is doing enough to reduce its environmental impact' has improved in performance from 89% in 2019/20 to 93% in 2020/21 and has met its 80% target.

Reducing Carbon Emissions & Mitigating the Impact of Climate Change (Great Communities)

18. The following environmental impact performance indicators mostly support the Council's 'Great Communities; and 'Corporate Enablers' outcomes.
19. A number of gases contribute to climate change. The Kyoto Protocol – the international agreement addressing climate change covers seven main GHGs: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), nitrous oxide (N₂O), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆) and Nitrogen Trifluoride NF₃. The following figures report on Carbon Dioxide (Carbon – CO₂) emissions only (in relation to indicators in the Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 which will be updated to include all greenhouse gases in the revised Strategic Plan indicator set).

20. In relation to the Strategic Plan 2018/2022 indicator, 'total Carbon emissions from LCC sites (excluding schools)' for 2020/21 showed a 19.6% reduction in carbon emissions to 9,228 tonnes in 2020/21 from 11,480 tonnes in 2019/20. The largest sources of emissions reduction were from business mileage, streetlighting & traffic signals, building electricity and fleet vehicles. A considerable amount of this reduction can be attributed to the impact of Covid-19 on council operations and the significant shift to home working of Council staff.
21. Carbon emissions from the Council's buildings have reduced by 11%, well ahead of its target and caused by significant reductions in electricity emissions, through reductions associated with the impact of Covid-19 on Council operations, a reduction in carbon intensity of grid electricity and energy efficiency and renewable energy investments across the Council's property estate.
22. Carbon emissions from LCC streetlighting and traffic signals have reduced by 14.9% since 2019/20. As the national grid continues to decarbonise electricity supply, performance on this indicator is expected to continue to improve over the long term. There are also ongoing measures to save energy, such as the programme of dimming down lights across the County at night.
23. The Council's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have reduced during 2020/21 by 19.4% since the previous year and reductions are currently ahead of the target. A comprehensive update on the Council's 2020-21 GHG emissions and progress against the council's net zero targets will be presented to the January 2022 meeting of the Committee.
24. Carbon emissions from LCC fleet decreased by 15.5% during 2020/21, displaying an improvement in performance, but remaining higher than the target. During 2020 the Council had to hire more vehicles to ensure social distancing which did result in additional fuel usage but this has been more than offset by the reduction in passenger fleet and the delay of resurfacing works during the year.
25. The latest data for 'CO2 emissions per capita (in LA influence)' shows an improvement in performance as carbon emissions declined from 5.0 tonnes per person in 2018 to 4.8 in 2019, and is similar to the average of other county councils. This is a measure of estimated carbon dioxide emissions per head of population. It excludes: emissions from motorways, diesel railways and net emissions from land use, land-use change and forestry on the grounds that these are outside of local authority control. Data is provided by the government (BEIS) and is two years in arrears.
26. The 'Total Business miles claimed' improved in performance as it fell from 5,560,000 miles in 2019/20 to 2,462,409 miles in 2020/21 and has met its target. This reduction can be attributed to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions as there were fewer staff travelling for work alongside the Councils improvement initiatives. Please note this data is not yet complete for the end of year, it is therefore expected to be a slight underestimate. The final result is expected to meet its target.
27. The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) deployment data (Domestic) per 10,000 households improved in performance by 13% in 2020/21 since the previous year as it increased from 37 (2019/20) to 42 (2020/21) per 10,000 households. Since this is beyond the direct control of the Council a target has not been set. The RHI supports

the installation of renewable and low-carbon-heating by individual households. RHI Payments are made over a 7-year period and, in most cases, are estimated using values from the dwelling's Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). Statistics for the RHI details the number of applications and accredited installations on the domestic schemes so far. This data covers the number of accreditations by local authority. This is a useful indicator as it provides an important insight into how sustainable Leicestershire households are in terms of heating.

28. Renewable energy capacity in the area has remained steady at 325 MW in 2020/21 when compared to the previous year (326 MW). This is not within the Council's control. Capacity has begun to plateau in recent years. This indicator performs below average when compared to other county councils (3rd quartile for 2019). The Council has limited influence over countywide renewable energy capacity, which tends to change in response to government incentive schemes and the wider energy market. However, progress is monitored in line with the objectives outlined in the Council's Environment Strategy 2018-2030.
29. Renewable energy generated has improved in performance slightly (1%) from 532,254 MWh in 2019/20 to 538,605 MWh in 2020/21. Generated energy has also begun to plateau in recent years. This indicator performs below average when compared to other county councils (3rd quartile for 2019).
30. The 'Amount of renewable energy generated as a percentage of consumption' was introduced following the Council's pledge to use 100% clean energy by 2050 as part of the UK100 campaign. The 'amount of renewable energy generated as a % of consumption' improved in performance from 13% in 2019/20 to 17% in quarter 3 in (2020/21). Despite this improvement it has not met its refreshed target of 23% yet. This could be due to reduced efficiency of solar panels over time, panels needing cleaning or an increase in electricity consumption.

Right infrastructure for Sustainable Clean Growth (Strong Economy)

31. 'Electric vehicle ownership – Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) rate/10,000 population' improved in performance as ownership increased from 104/10,000 in 2019/20 to 147/10,000 2020/21 (rolling 12 months data to March 2021) resulting in an increase of 42% demonstrating a significant improvement in performance over the year. This reveals an increasing momentum of people moving from fossil fuelled vehicles to more sustainable electric alternatives. However, Leicestershire remains in the third quartile (below average) when compared to other counties for 2020. Leicestershire's overall rate of car ownership was 5,440 per 10,000 population in 2020, which is very slightly above the average for county councils.
32. Electric vehicle charging locations have seen a 28% improvement as they increased from 15.86 per 100,000 population in 2019/20 to 20.33 per 100,000 population in 2020/21. The 'National Chargepoint Registry (NCR)' was established by the UK Government in 2011 to provide a public database of publicly-funded charge points across the UK in support of the Government's objective to promote the use and sales of Ultra Low Emission vehicles (ULEVs). This data covers Leicestershire locations only and does not include charging points that are privately funded. This data uses the latest population estimates to determine locations per 100,000 people.

33. The Council is working to provide better data on biodiversity in the County. Currently the Council is monitoring the ecological status of Leicestershire rivers which provides a snapshot on how biodiverse they are. The Environment Agency (EA) provides data on 'Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) in good ecological status' which was 9.4% in 2019. The EA have changed their methodology regarding how they assess river quality data in 2019. They have adopted a much more rigorous methodology in surveying the status of rivers which now covers new substances, new standards, and improved techniques and methods. It is therefore not possible to reliably compare 2019 data with previous results.
34. Similarly to the above, the EA has also applied their new methodology to reporting of 'Leicestershire rivers (excluding Leicester) in good chemical status' data. This has resulted in no rivers in Leicestershire having a good chemical status in 2019. In fact, no surface water bodies nationally have met the criteria for achieving good chemical status.
35. 'NO₂ exceedances for Leicestershire' declined from 8 in 2018 to 3 in 2019 suggesting an improvement in NO₂ air quality performance. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is a gas that is mainly produced during the combustion of fossil fuels. This indicator is the number of times NO₂ has exceeded 40 micrograms. It is published by district councils in their Air Quality Annual Status Reports. During 2019 the UK experienced slower economic growth which may have contributed to a reduction in the production of NO₂ via fewer emissions from cars, trucks and buses, power plants, and off-road equipment within the locality. As previously mentioned, electric vehicle ownership has also increased over recent years, which may also have contributed to reduced NO₂.

Health and Wellbeing

36. Inhalation of particulate pollution can have adverse health impacts. The biggest impact of particulate air pollution on public health is understood to be from long-term exposure to fine particulate matter, also known as PM_{2.5}, which increases the age-specific mortality risk. This data describes the annual concentration of human-made fine particulate matter at an area level, adjusted to account for population exposure and is measured in micrograms per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). The major sources of primary PM_{2.5} are combustion in the energy industries, road transport (both exhaust and non-exhaust emissions), rail and air transport, residential sources, and small-scale waste burning. Performance on this has declined as total PM_{2.5} increased from 9.13 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2018 to 9.92 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2019, which is higher than the England average of 9.60 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (2019).
37. The highest levels in the county are present in Blaby, North West Leicestershire and along the M1. Both the M1, East Midlands Airport and various quarries appear to have the most impact on levels. This data is also reported by the Council's Public Health service. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association suggests that long-term exposure to PM_{2.5} may lead to plaque deposits in arteries, causing vascular inflammation and a hardening of the arteries which can eventually lead to heart attack and stroke. Scientists in the study estimated that for every 10 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) increase in fine particulate air pollution, there is an associated 4%, 6% and 8% increased risk of all-cause, cardiopulmonary and lung cancer mortality, respectively. A national UK target is due to be set before 2022.

Energy Efficient Homes (Quality Homes)

38. As part of supporting the Council's Affordable and Quality Homes outcome the Council monitors both the energy efficiency of new and existing homes within the County. In 2020/21 'The percentage of properties with Energy Performance certificate rating C+ for existing homes' was 39%, an improvement in performance from the previous year of 35%. Leicestershire is in the fourth (worst) quartile for this indicator when compared to other English county councils for 2020/21. The authority has limited influence over these indicators. In January 2021 the County Council continued work with E.ON to provide people with free, first-time gas central heating installation, and urged eligible residents to apply. Households not connected to mains gas and relying on inefficient ways of heating their homes can be eligible for the measures, which are part of the Leicestershire Warm Homes Fund Project. Residents on certain income levels or those in receipt of certain benefits, including child benefit, or those who are now receiving Universal Credit due to the pandemic, may also be able to apply for the support. Qualifying homes could also receive a free gas network connection through the Affordable Warmth Solutions programme. The project follows a successful funding bid by the council to the £150m Warm Homes Fund. Eligible residents may also be able to receive free insulation measures for their homes, including loft and cavity wall insulation, further improving the warmth and comfort of homes across the county.
39. 'The percentage of domestic properties with energy Performance Certificate rating C+ for new homes' was 97% in 2020/21 and had declined in performance slightly since the previous year from 99%. Leicestershire is in the first (best) quartile for this indicator when compared to other English county councils for 2020/21.

Background papers

[Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Outcomes Framework and Plans 2018-22](#)

Leicester and Leicestershire Business Survey 2020, Available on request.

[Environment Strategy 2018 – 2030: delivering a better future](#)

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Equalities and Human Rights Implications

There are no specific equal opportunities implications to note as part of this performance report.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Environment & Climate Change Annual Report Performance Dashboard, 2020/21

Appendix B – Environment & Climate Change Annual Report highlights.

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